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ABSTRACT

This discussion compares Japan and the United States in terms of: (1) perceptions of children and childhood; (2) parents and parenting; (3) the preschool system; and (4) the social structure of child care settings. It is asserted that the most profound difference between Japanese and American perceptions of children may be that in Japan the child's nature is viewed as not only different from but also superior to that of the adult. Research indicates that Japanese teachers' treatment of children assumes that children are basically good, and that children's misbehavior is due to inadequate environments or insufficient effort and can be corrected by careful training. Differences in parenting in the two countries are described in terms of parental availability, modes of parenting, use of physical punishment, dependency training, and control versus permissiveness. Japan has one of the world's highest rates of preschool enrollment. Variations within the Japanese preschool system have important implications for the care and socialization of enrolled children. Concluding remarks concern aspects of the American child care system which place great numbers of children at risk, and ways in which the Japanese do things differently and, it is claimed, better. Approximately 130 references are cited. (RH)

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CHANGING DEFINITIONS OF CHILDHOOD
CROSSCULTURAL COMPARISONS

Sarane Spence Boocock

The Third Milton and Eleanor Eromer Lecture
on Early Childhood Education
December 31, 1987

PS 017755

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The Milton and Eleanor Fromer Lectures
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1. Prof. Al J. Solnit, March 6, 1986
   Children's Rights and Needs in the Light of New Research

2. Prof. Teshome Wagaw, April 1, 1987
   Parent-Child Intervention Among Ethiopian Jewry: Research in Progress (unpublished)

3. Prof. Sarane S. Boocock, December 31, 1987
   Changing Definitions of Childhood; Crosscultural Comparisons

CHANGING DEFINITIONS OF CHILDHOOD: CROSSCULTURAL COMPARISONS*

Sarane Spence Boocock

Even the most case-hardened Americans were horrified last month by the bizarre case of Elizabeth Steinberg, the six-year-old New York City child who was, quite literally, beaten to death by her adoptive parents. The flood of media accounts following her death revealed not only the truly gruesome details of Elizabeth's last days, but also clear evidence that her death was not an isolated incident. On the contrary, New York State reported 95,000 cases of child abuse last year, 10,000 of them involving serious physical injuries from beatings, scaldings, and worse. In New York City alone, over 100 children died as a result of parental abuse, an average of one death every four days!

The Steinberg case commanded headlines and front-page stories for at least a week, a long time by mass media standards. Americans' attention span is much shorter for news about the large number of children who live in poverty, who have no regular source of medical or dental care, whose parents cannot find, or afford, adequate supervision for their children while they are at work. Such issues, lacking the high drama of death by parental abuse, are relegated to the back pages, or to an occasional documentary on public television. The Steinberg case forced Americans to confront, however briefly, the vulnerable position of many children in an affluent nation that likes to think of itself as child-loving, even child-centered.

Without wishing to absolve American society from full responsibility for the inadequacies of its child care system, I would like to argue that we are not alone in our dilemmas. While every society faces problems with regard to the upbringing of children that are to some degree unique to that society, the pressures placed on the social institutions responsible for the nurturance and socialization of children constitute, increasingly, a universal problem. In all of the industrialized nations of the world, child care has emerged as one of the major social issues of the 1980s. As a result of large-scale changes in demographic stucture, work patterns, family structure and relationships, and social attitudes (particularly with respect to women's social roles), child care arrangements are already problematic for many parents. For a growing number of families, full time care of children within the home is no longer feasible, and high quality child care facilities outside the home are far from sufficient to meet current and projected needs. Finally, the position of children in society--how children are perceived, socialized and educated--is also undergoing change, such that the experience of growing up in the 1980s is different in many respects from what it was in earlier decades.

For the past fifteen years, I have been studying, from a crosscultural perspective, the changing status of children, changing patterns of child rearing, and the development of public opinion and public policy with regard to children. My research has been conducted in United States, Israel, Sweden, and most recently, in Japan. All are societies which, however much they may differ culturally and socially, are grappling with the problem of creating a coherent child care system in a context of rapid social change.

In my discussion today, I shall draw mainly from data comparing Japan and the United States. This is not because the problems I shall describe are special to these two societies--I don't believe they are--and not just because of the quickening pace of economic competition between the two countries--though that has certainly stimulated Americans' interest in Japan. I am relying on comparisons with Japan partly for the very practical reason that my most recent field work has been conducted there. That is not my only reason. I view Japan as one of the world's pioneering societies in the development of high quality group care for children, a society which has been particularly innovative with respect to many of the child care problems that plague the American system. Finally, I find examination of Japanese child rearing practices and child care institutions instructive because they challenge some of the basic tenets of Western theories and research in sociology, education and child development. I have not studied Israeli society closely since the 1970s, and I certainly do not feel qualified to analyze Israeli child care institutions in front of an audience like this one, but I hope that you will give me the benefit of your knowledge and your views in the discussion following my remarks.

Certainly, by almost any indicator of health, welfare, or educational attainment, the state of children in Japan today is unusually favorable. Japan currently shares with Finland and Sweden the world's lowest infant mortality rate, and virtually no Japanese children suffer from malnutrition, low birth weight, or other health problems associated with poverty or environmental pollution (UNICEF, 1985). By contrast, the United States now has one of the highest infant mortality rates among developed nations. In 1983, 13.8 million American children, or 22% of all American children under age 18, were living in poverty; 14.5% had no regular source of health care; one out of every three had never seen a dentist. In some urban areas and among some racial minorities, infant mortality and illness rates approached the rates found in Third World countries (Children's Defense Fund, 1985; Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1983).

A similar pattern may be seen with regard to educational indicators. A majority of Japanese children are in an organized--that is, licensed and government-subsidized--preschool program by age three, virtually all complete an elementary education, and secondary education too is all but universal; over 90 percent of all young Japanese now graduate from high school, a larger proportion than can be found in any other nation. Functional literacy among Japanese is estimated at between 99 and 100 percent, and on the International Evaluation of

Educational Achievement studies carried out since the 1960s, the average scores of Japanese students were the highest of the nations studied in several subjects, including mathematics. (There is, moreover, relatively little variance around the mean of the Japanese scores, indicating that most of the children who took the test scored at or near the high average scores.) By contrast, the proportion of American children enrolled in organized preschool programs in 1980 was 25 percent of three-year-olds and 43 percent of four-year-olds; not until age five are the majority of American children enrolled in such programs. The high school graduation rate is now approximately 75 percent, and illiteracy is viewed as a major problem in the United States, with some estimates running as high as 30 percent. The most recent international comparisons of mathematics achievement placed the U.S. at the bottom of the developed nations surveyed (Rohlen, 1983; White, 1987; Kozol, 1985; Steen, 1987; Crosswhite et al., 1986; U.S. Department of Education, 1987; Center for Education Statistics, 1986).

How are such large differences in health, welfare, and educational indicators to be explained? Some would argue that the seeds of Japan's present day successes were sown long before the present era, and that during the two-and-a-half centuries before the Meiji Restoration, Japanese society provided an environment that was relatively favorable to the development of human resources. For example, Japan was the first Asian nation to develop a system of formal school education, and even before the modern system was established, in the 1870s, the numbers of experienced teachers and the proportion of Japanese who had been exposed to the basics of reading and writing was relatively high. During the Tokugawa period, Japanese literacy rates compared favorably with those in most European societies, even those with higher levels of economic development. As one scholar concluded: "Although the content of the new learning would be quite different, the package it came in would be recognizable and to that extent more acceptable" (Rubinger, 1986: 196. See also Passin, 1965; Dore, 1964). Concerning the general level of public health, recent epidemiological research (Jannetta, 1987) indicates that during this same period, when Europe was experiencing periodic epidemics of typhus, smallpox, dysentary, cholera and bubonic plague, such outbreaks of disease were, with the exception of smallpox, rare in Japan, which had a relatively low and stable mortality rate throughout the Tokugawa period.

Others argue that Japanese society has been less affected by or has responded more effectively to some of the changes that threaten to undermine the social order in the United States and other western societies. On the one hand, both in Japan and in the United States, there is a trend toward a greater total number of households but fewer persons per household. (About 20 percent of all households in both countries are now single-person households.) In both countries, birth and fertility rates have dropped to the extent that few couples have more than two children. Single-parent families are increasing and are now more likely to result from divorce or desertion than from the death of one of the parents (Koseisho, 1980; Economic Welfare Bureau, 1980; Economic Planning Agency, 1985 and 1986; Shoji, 1984; Fuse, 1984a and 1984b). On the other hand, the divorce rate and the proportion of

single-parent families in Japan is less than one-third that of comparable rates in the United States, and opinion poll data indicate that a higher proportion of Japanese than Americans disapprove of divorce. The three-generation family still holds a place, both as an ideal and in reality, in Japan that it does not hold (some would say has never held) in American society. To be sure, the proportion of three-generation households has dropped precipitously, down from 44 percent of all Japanese households in 1955 to only 15 percent in 1984. However, polls indicate that a majority of Japanese, at all age levels, continue to evaluate the extended family more positively than the nuclear family. A comparative study conducted by the Prime Minister's Office in 1980, showed that 55 percent of the Japanese respondents, compared to seven percent of the American respondents, said that they themselves would prefer to live together with their children and grandchildren when they became old (Fuse, 1984a and 1984b. Recent changes in family and household structure in Japan are also discussed in Economic Planning Agency, 1986; Long, 1987; Monbusho, 1984; Befu, 1986. American trends are the subject of Weitzman, 1985; Cherlin, 1981).

The employment of women outside the home has increased steadily in both countries, to the point that the proportion working exceeds the proportion of full-time housewives (Fuse, 1984a; Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1983), but differences in attitudes toward women's roles and in actual employment patterns remain. While the ratio of full-time to part-time workers has increased in the United States, the reverse is true in Japan, where the percentage of part-time workers among all female workers more than doubled (to 20.5%) between 1965 and 1982. The proportion of female employees in the 25-34 age bracket, the modal years for childbirth and care of young children, has remained considerably lower in Japan than in the U.S. Also relatively more Japanese than American mothers work in home-based family businesses, which, like three-generation households, enable women to take advantage of the "mutual assistance functions" of the family (Ministry of Labor, 1983: Iwao and Sugiyama, 1984; Fuse, 1984a and b).

Thus it seems fair to conclude that many social changes that have impact on children's lives are present in both societies, but that there may also be significant differences in the way that Americans and Japanese have responded to those changes. During the remaining time, I would like to take a closer look at the child care systems in the United States and Japan today, with particular emphasis upon those aspects of American child care which seem to place so many of our children at risk. This comparison will focus upon four main topics:

(1) perceptions of children and childhood;

(2) parents and parenting;

(3) the preschool system, including day care;

(4) the social structure of child care settings;

1. Perceptions of Children and Childhood

Scholars attempting to compare Japanese and American social institutions often conclude that they are based upon different views of human nature. More specifically, it has been argued that the particular blend of "imported" ideals (e.g., Confucian ethics, Buddhist views of human nature) with indigenous Japanese culture has produced a society whose members value children more highly and invest more in their socialization and education than do Americans and other Western societies.

Perhaps the most profound difference between Japanese and American perceptions of children is that in the former, the child's nature is viewed as not only different from but even superior to that of adults. Nowhere in the religious or folk traditions that have shaped Japanese cultural values is there any notion parallel to the Calvinist Doctrine of Original Sin. While the presence of evil in the world is acknowledged, it is connected to adults (generally viewed as morally inferior to children) and events in the adult world which corrupt the originally pure and good nature of children. This conception of children seems to have multiple origins. Kojima's (1986) analysis of belief systems related to child rearing techniques posits Confucian sources, particularly the ideas of Mencius, which took root in Japan by the eighth century, although the notion of specialness and innate goodness in children also seems consistent with Buddhism as it developed in Japan as well as with indigenous folk beliefs. A number of Japanese proverbs or popular sayings refer to the goodness and specialness of children, e.g.: Ko ni sugitara takara-nashi (There is no treasure that surpasses a child); Tsumi mo kegare mo nai kodomo (In children there is neither sin nor pollution); or Nanatsu made wa kami no uchi de aru (Until seven, children are with the gods). The last proverb refers to the sacred or divine nature of children. Folkloric research tells us that children played important roles in local religious festivals, walking at the head of religious processions (underscoring their closeness to the gods) or playing the parts of visitors from the gods in shrine ceremonies (Hara and Wagatsuma, 1974; Odo, 1982). "Until seven, children are with the gods" also refers to the folk belief that infants and young children exist in a kind of limbo between the spirit world and the human world, a particularly vulnerable position in that they are always at risk of being "called back." Thus a number of ceremonies for infants and young children were designed to placate the gods and to obtain their protection of the child during these vulnerable years. Traditional child rearing practices emphasized close physical contact between child and caretaker, and avoidance of any kind of stimulation that might provoke the child into returning to the spirit world whence she came (Hara and Wagatsuma, 1974; Odo, 1982; Caudill and Schooler, 1973).

Observational research in present day Japanese preschools indicates that teachers' treatment of children continues to be based upon the assumption that the children are basically good, and that misbehavior is due to inadequate environments or insufficient effort and can be corrected by careful training. One such study, of 15 Japanese nursery schools, found that not only did many teachers tolerate a noise level and a latitude of behavior that American teachers would probably find unacceptable, but they also tended to attribute aggressive or

mischievous acts (e.g., one child hiding another's shoes, or several children dropping clay "bombs" on the fish in the aquarium) to lack of understanding on the child's part rather than to intentional misbehavior (Lewis, 1984. Similar anecdotal evidence is reported in Tobin, 1987; Fujita and Sano, in press).

While Japanese child rearing is based upon a view of children as naturally good unless tainted by evil environments or experiences, American child rearing still retains elements of Calvinistic Protestantism, which views the child as bearing at birth the seeds of evil (for an analysis by Japanese scholars of the Doctrine of Original Sin and its effects upon American child rearing practices, see Hara and Wagatsuma, 1974: Chapter 3). Certainly the child as a mixture of good and evil is a common theme of seventeenth century sermons, literature and advice to parents. John Robinson, whose Of Children and Their Education was probably the closest thing to Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care for colonial parents, characterized the child as a "blessing great but dangerous." Samuel Davies, a Presbyterian minister who preached in colonial Virginia, described the child variously as "a little wond'rous miniature of man," "an embryo angel," and "an infant fiend" (quoted in Schorsch, 1979: 29). In her poem entitled "Childhood," the seventeenth century New England poetess Anne Bradstreet described the infant as follows:

> Stained from birth with Adam's sinfull fact
>
> Thence I began to sin as soon as act:
>
> A perverse will, a love to what's forbid,
>
> A serpent's sting in pleasing face lay hid;
>
> A lying tongue as soon as it could speak
>
> And fifth commandment do daily break,
>
> Oft stubborn, peevish, sullen, pout, and cry,
>
> Then naught can please and yet I know not why.
>
> (Bradstreet, quoted in Cable, 1972: 20).

New ideas emanating from the European Enlightenment reached the U.S. in the eighteenth century, and produced new ways of thinking about the nature and nurture of children, in particular, tempering the harshness of Calvinist modes of upbringing. In the American case, however, the imported ideas were not assimilated into a long cultural tradition, as Confucian ethnics blended with Japanese folk customs, but rather set up two conflicting intellectual strains which are still fiercely debated in America today. Postman has conceptualized these two intellectual strains as follows:

> We might call them the Lockean, or the Protestant, conception of childhood, and the Rousseauian, or the Romantic, conception. In the Protestant view the child is an unformed person who through literacy, education, reason, self-control, and shame may be made into a civilized adult. In the Romantic view it is not the unformed child but the deformed adult who is the problem. The child possesses as his or her birthright capacities for candor, understanding, curiosity, and spontaneity that are deadened by literacy, education, reason, self-control, and shame (Postman, 1982: 59).

Some scholars believe that no basic paradigm of childhood yet exists in American culture, that there are identifiable theoretical "camps," but no consensus on a particular theoretical position.

The invention of childhood. It has been argued by a number of social historians, of whom Philippe Aries is the most well known, that childhood itself is a social construction, that childhood as we know it was not invented until about 400 years ago. Recently, Japanese scholars have questioned the validity of the Aries-type model in the case of Japan, and have suggested that the construction of childhood is rather different in Japan and in the West.

In his often-cited Centuries of Childhood (1962), Aries deduced, from analysis of portraits and other works of art, that until about the seventeenth century, European art "did not know childhood or did not attempt to portray it" (Aries, 1962: 33). If they appeared at all, children were distinguished from adults only by their smaller size, otherwise resembling their elders in clothing, bodily proportion and facial expression. Diaries and other written documents turned up many examples of persons under the age of ten employed in offices, workshops, or on the battle field, or enrolled as university students. Linguistic analyses of the age terminology used in legal documents indicated that the distinction between "child" and "non-child" was fuzzy, often based upon criteria other than biological age (employment status, or degree of economic independence, for example). Social historians do acknowledge a period of dependence, but point to evidence that it was brief and that nurturance was minimal. Perhaps the majority of infants and young children were raised by servants or wet-nurses, were away from their own homes for the first three to five years of their lives, and saw little of their biological parents when they returned (deMause, 1975: Chapter 1). Not surprisingly, the majority of children did not survive infancy, and those who did were early absorbed into the adult world, where they engaged in the same sorts of work, study, and play as the adults with whom they freely mingled.

Sometime between the end of the Middle Ages and the seventeenth century, by Aries's reckoning, a combination of social and economic forces changed the organization of the workplace, the community, and the family. First the more affluent classes, later the lower classes, withdrew from the "polymorphous" society, in which the "movement of collective life carried along in a single torrent all ages and classes,

leaving nobody any time for solitude and privacy," into the private home where:

> the child had won a place beside his parents to which he could not lay claim at a time when it was customary to entrust him to strangers. . . . The child became an indispensable element of everyday life, and his parents worried about his education, his career, his future. He was not yet the pivot of the whole system, but he had become a much more important character (Aries, 1962:403).

The American colonies were coming into being at about the time of the "discovery" of childhood posited by Aries, and American childhood combined elements of the old and new. Demos's data indicate that except in the case of death or serious disability, infants and young children were brought up by their biological parents, and that the period before about age seven was a "relatively comfortable and tranquil time." Infants were dressed in light, non-restrictive robes, quite unlike the tight swaddling described in the work of Aries and deMause, and in their cradles, were probably never far from "the ebb and flow of domestic life." By age seven, however, most children had been put to work, often in someone else's home; Demos estimates that the majority of persons in servitude in the colonies were children (Demos, 1970: Chapter 9).

In early portraits, American children, like their European counterparts, resembled miniaturized adults. Distinctive physiognomy and clothing did not appear in paintings until the eighteenth century, when one could also detect for the first time "a note of genuine affection between parents and children" (Schorsch, 1979: 88; see also Brant and Cullman, 1981). While acknowledging that formal portraiture does not tell us "what concessions may have been made to [the child's] youth" before and after the sitting, Demos argues that the "adultification" of children in paintings may:

> imply a whole attitude of mind. . . . There was no idea that each generation required separate spheres of work or recreation. Children learned the behavior appropriate to their sex and station by sharing in the activities of their parents (Demos, 1970: 139-40).

Once she crossed the threshold into the adult world, a child's age could be relatively unimportant. Kett's research on age-grading in pre-industrial America indicates that many people "did not know their own exact age, much less those of acquaintances, friends, and relatives"(Kett, 1978: 167). The records of New England academies examined by Kett showed students ranging in age from eight to 22, and school attendance in general was sporadic, more in accordance with the agricultural seasons and the rise and fall of families' economic fortunes than with the students' ages. Kett places full entry into the labor force later than Aries does, but believes that virtually all children had some work experience by puberty.

Some Japanese scholars familiar with Aries's "discovery of childhood" model, have argued recently that it does not apply to Japan, that clear distinctions between child and adult, and expressions of deep bonds of affection between parents and their children can be found in Japanese literature and art well before the seventeenth century (Yamamura, 1986; Kojima, 1986 and personal communication). The following fragment, for example, comes from the Manyoshu, the poetry collection dating from the early eighth century (Levy, 1981: 348):

When I eat of melon,

I think of my children.

When I eat chestnuts,

I long for them even more.

Where do they possibly come from?

Their mischief flickers before my eyes

and keeps me from my sleep.

The Hoke-kyo Sutra, a twelfth century decorated scripture, and several emaki, or picture scrolls, dating from the fourteenth century contain numerous renderings of children with plump bodies, childish facial expressions (some downright mischievous), and distinctive hair styles and clothing (short kimono, often awry). Children are shown spinning tops, teasing animals, sprawled on their stomachs drawing or looking at picture books. In one segment, a mother has just finished bathing her little son; in another, a chubby baby in the process of emptying his bladder is being held out from the veranda by his caretaker, while three urchins in rather untidy kimono are pointing and laughing at this attempt at toilet training (Nakamura, Kikuchi, and Murai, 1981: Plates 10, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 26, and accompanying documentation). Young children were also the subjects of sculptural portraits. In one particularly appealing example, a fourteenth century wooden portrait of Prince Shotoku at the age of two, the little prince stands in prayer, an adult activity, but his tiny hands pressed together in front of him only underscore his babyishness, as do the plump rolls of fat on his neck and torso and his sweetly rounded baby shoulders (MOA Bijutsukan, 1983: Plate 86 and accompanying documentation).

No systematic comparison of the treatment of children in Western vs. Eastern art and literature yet exists, and we shall not attempt one here. The above examples suggest, however, that at a time when Western artists still "saw" children as smaller or not-yet-complete adults, children who looked different from adults and engaged in "childish" pastimes had already made their appearance in Japanese art.

The actual treatment of children in everyday life in various periods of Japanese history is more difficult to assess. Sakurai's classic history of child life in Japan (1982) indicates that at least

until the end of the Edo period, childhood was as brief for the common people of Japan as it was for the pre-modern Europeans studied by Aries. Children went to work early, either learning their parents' occupation or being sent into other people's homes or workshops. The sale of children, especially daughters, was not uncommon. In Japan, as in the United States and Europe, the introduction of modern industry led to the recruitment of women and children into factories and mines, where many were compelled to work for long hours at low pay. Even after the establishment of a national education system and laws prohibiting the exploitation of children (which more or less coincided with Progressive Era reforms in the U.S.), work often took precedence over school attendance in farming and fishing villages. In the best-selling novel, Twenty-four Eyes, which depicted life in such a village during the last pre-war years, as seen through the eyes of a first-grade teacher:

> There had been an unwritten understanding since long ago that the village children might spend their time in play up to the eighth or ninth year. But even while they played, they were not entirely free to do as they wanted. They always had to have either their little brothers or sisters around them or babies on their backs (Tsuboi, 1957: 61-62).

While the law now prescribed that these children attend school, the teacher-narrator notes that there was no practical way to enforce the law, and a parent's death or serious illness usually meant that the children left school altogether to take over the housekeeping and care of younger siblings.

Finally, in both countries, periods of national emergency (e.g., the Great Depression in the U. S., World War II in Japan) saw what Glen Elder has called the "downward extension of adult-like experience," as school-aged children went to work to help support their families or the war effort (Elder, 1974; Yokota, 1984a).

In the 1980s, a number of books were published in the United States with titles like The Disappearance of Childhood (Postman, 1982), Children Without Childhood (Winn, 1983), The Hurried Child (Elkind, 1981), Our Endangered Children (Packard, 1983), and The Erosion of Childhood (Suransky, 1982). All argued that after a long period of development, childhood has reached its zenith and we are now turning back toward less differentiation between the social roles of children and adults. The hypothesized causes of this trend vary--from the breakdown of the American family to the effects of television--but all of the authors believe that it has produced a "downward extension of adult-like experience" of a highly undesirable kind (as exemplified by kiddie porn and child prostitution).

The "disappearance of childhood" theory has not so far attracted much attention in Japan, where sociologists seem more concerned with why so many Japanese (especially males) suffer from the "Moratorium Man" syndrome, making them reluctant to leave childhood behind (Okonogi, 1978. For a discussion of several recent books on this theme, see

Davis, 1983). Contemporary Japanese culture contains many elements that may insulate children from the adult world--e.g., school uniforms, which identify the wearer's age-status unambiguously, and the greater pervasiveness of school in the lives of Japanese children generally (Cummings, 1980; Shimahara, 1986; Rohlen, 1983). As Rohlen has noted, even students as old as 17 or 18 are universally addressed and referred to as kodomo (children), rather than as "young people" or "young adults," as tends to be the custom in the United States. Japanese teachers:

> in no way encourage their students to regard themselves as adults. In fact, it is their duty to prevent them from experimenting with adult pleasures and vices. Students are reminded of their obligations to family, school, and society. No one suggests they have rights (Rohlen, 1983: 196).

2. Parents and Parenting

Since the 1970s, a variety of American studies have indicated that the responsibilities and skills involved in caring for young children are, increasingly, in conflict with other activities and roles that adults value, both within and outside of marriage. Among the findings of the Detroit Area Study was that proportionately more women in the 1970s than in the 1950s said that companionship with their husband was the most valuable aspect of marriage (60 percent in 1971 compared to 48 percent in 1955); fewer said that their prime motive to marry was the opportunity to have children (down from 26 percent in 1955 to 13 percent in 1971. Duncan et al., 1973: 8). A survey on attitudes about raising children, based upon a national probability sample of American households with children, found that:

> --a majority (59%) of the adults disagreed with the statement: "People who decide not to have children are basically selfish";
>
> --66% agreed that: "It's important for parents to have their own lives and interests even if it means spending less time with their children";
>
> --63% disagreed with the statement: "For the children's sake, parents should stay together even when they are unhappy".

Concerning children's obligations toward their parents, fewer than half of the adults felt that children have such obligations or that parents have a right to expect their children to help them when they are old or in difficulty (Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc., 1977: 66-68). Finally, surveys conducted by the Michigan Survey Research Institute have shown that the presence of children had a negative rather than a positive effect upon their parents' marital satisfaction (Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers, 1975).

It has been posited by a number of scholars that a major difference between Japanese and American nuclear families is that in the latter, the husband-wife relationships takes precedence over the parent-child relationship, while in the former, the parent-child (especially mother-child) bond is the central one (e.g., Befu, 1986; Lebra, 1984 and 1976: Chapter 8; DeVos, 1974; Azuma, 1986; Vogel, 1978). Indeed there is considerable evidence that for many Japanese women, the role of mother is still central to their lives in a way that it no longer is for most American women, and that Japanese women tend to be more emotionally involved with their children than with their husbands. A nation-wide survey conducted in the early 1970s found that in answer to the question: "What makes your life meaningful?", a majority of the female respondents (52.6%) ranked "Children" first, with "Family" second but much lower than the first-ranked item (13.2%), "Occupation" third (9.0%), and "Husband" last (2.7%). Male respondents ranked "Occupation" first (43.9%), "Children" second (28.8%), "Hobbies" third (15.9%), and "Wife" last (4.8%). For both sexes, what was important about their family was the children. Even for men, children were second only to their jobs in giving meaning to their lives. Neither men nor women were likely to mention their spouse as significant, though men were almost twice as likely as women to do so (Tsurumi, 1977).

Perhaps because of the centrality of children in their lives, Japanese couples with children are much less likely than Americans to engage in shared leisure activities without their children; babysitters, rare in Japan generally, are almost never used to allow couples to go out together (Imamura, 1987; Befu, 1986; Coleman, 1983). Moreover, survey data comparing respondents in several countries, including Japan and the United States, indicate a greater acceptance of sex role division of labor in Japan than elsewhere; only in Japan did a substantial majority of respondents agree with the following statements:

> The husband should go out to work, the wife should stay at home. (Seventy-one percent of the Japanese respondents were in favor of this proposition, followed by 56% in the Philippines, 34% in the U.S., 33% in West Germany, 26% in the United Kingdon, and 14% in Sweden.)
>
> After marriage, the wife should look after her husband, children and others in the family. (Seventy-two percent of the Japanese respondents were in favor, followed by 58% in the Philippines, 41% in West Germany, 18% in the U.S., 10% in the U.K., and 6% in Sweden. Prime Minister's Office, 1983.)

While child rearing in America is now defined as the responsibility of both parents (however much the ideal may be honored in the breach, and despite the growing number of single-parent households), changes in Japanese family structure and functioning have, if anything, reinforced sex role differentiation. In most households, the day to day responsibilities of parenting fall on the mother:

> In general mothers act as disciplinarians, often completely replacing their husbands as the authority figure. The traditional images of the stern father and the protective mother (gempu jibo) are apparently no longer the acknowledged reality in many homes: the Japanese father seems to have become "insignificant" (Wagatsuma and Lanham, 1983: 278).

The very intensity of many Japanese mothers' involvement with their one or at-most two children is, however, viewed by some with concern. The phenomenon of the kyoiku mama (education mother), who invests so much of herself in guiding her children's academic activities that she loses her own identity, is, on the one hand, lauded as the source of Japanese students' striking scholastic successes, and, on the other hand, criticized for depriving her children of their childhood (Simons, 1987; Vogel, 1978; Condon, 1985: 130-131). The effort to raise "perfect" children has also been hypothesized as the cause of a high incidence of anxiety (referred to as ikuji neurose, or "childrearing neuosis", in the Japanese research literature) among Japanese mothers, especially among those with high levels of education (Kojima, forthcoming; Sasaki et al., 1982). Even more extreme forms of response to the stresses of mothering are two phenomena which, if not unique to Japan, have a higher incidence there than elsewhere: (1) johatsu, (literally "evaporation"), which refers to an increasing incidence of mothers who desert their families, and (2) oyako-shinju, (literally, parent-child joint suicide), which refers to cases in which mothers take the lives of their children along with their own (Monbusho, 1984; Wagatsuma, 1981).

If Japanese mothers are thought to be excessively involved in their children's lives, the lack of paternal involvement has given rise to discussions of "fatherlessness" as a serious social problem (Wagatsuma, 1977; Kawai, 1976 and 1981). Men employed by large companities and government bureaus routinely work ten to twelve-hour-days six (sometimes seven) days a week, coming home only to eat and sleep, often long after the children are in bed. Moreover, a substantial number of Japanese fathers are absent for even longer periods of time, in particular, tanshin-funin-sha, i.e., men transferred to posts in other parts of the country or abroad who go without their families. The tanshin-funin-sha phenomenon seems to be the result of (1) policies common to most large Japanese companies, which view frequent transfers of male white collar workers as unavoidable both for company development and individual career advancement, and (2) parents' reluctance to interrupt their children's education. A 1983 survey found that 56 percent of transferred men with children in junior or senior high school lived apart from their families, and some analysts argue that many such families exhibit the problems of single parent families and that they should be classified as such (Kojima, forthcoming; Fuse, 1984a; Japan Times, March 25, 1984: 7; New York Times, April 29, 1987: D8).

Father absence also results from divorce. As we have seen, divorce rates are still relatively low in Japan, but when divorce does

occur, Japanese fathers are less likely than American divorced fathers to provide financial support, and given the reluctance of the courts to accept the principle of joint custody, are more likely to disappear entirely from their children's lives (Japan Times, December 17, 1985: 2, and December 23, 1985: 14; Fuse, 1984a and 1984b).

The supposed loss of paternal authority in the postwar period has been blamed for social problems ranging from children refusing to attend school to violence in the home and school to increases in mother-child and whole-family suicides (Kawai, 1976 and 1981; Ogura, 1981; Wagatsuma, 1977). Little hard evidence exists on the precise effects of weak or absent fathers on children's development, and discussions of "fatherlessness" tend to ignore the still large numbers of Japanese fathers who are self-employed and for whom the home and workplace are in the same location (Befu, 1986). However, recent childrearing manuals, including some produced by government agencies and organizations of child care professionals, have begun urging fathers to take a more active role in family affairs, though what they seem to have in mind is fathers who play with their children and lend a hand with household chores rather than a return to the "stern father, protective mother" (gempu jibo) model (e.g., Monbusho, 1984: 78-81; Takuma, 1984: Zenkoku Shiritsu Hoiku-en Renmei, 1982: 3-4).

Despite differences in Japanese and American parental role expectations, there are also important commonalities. In particular, lack of adequate preparation for parenthood and decreasing availability of parents to their children are viewed as growing problems in both societies. The privatization of family life, the isolation of many young parents from relatives or other members of the community from whom they might seek advice and assistance in child rearing, and the fact that few new parents have had prior experience in caring for, or even observing the care of, babies and young children, have all contributed to making the transition to parenthood a crisis rather than a natural turning point. In both countries, a huge number of how-to-parent books and magazines are available, but the flood of expert advice, much of it conflicting, may discourage rather than reassure new parents (Rossi, 1968 and 1977; Boocock, 1976; Kojima, forthcoming; Morioka, 1986).

Concerning parental availability, recent American research indicates that few American parents, whether or not they are employed outside the home, spend more than a few minutes a day doing anything with their children except watching television. For example, according to a national survey of households conducted by the Michigan Survey Research Institute (Fischman, 1986), the average amounts of "quality time" (i.e., engaging in activities such as reading to the children, conversing or playing with them) shared by American parents and their children were: 30 minutes per weekday and 36 minutes per weekend day for homemaker mothers; 11 and 30 minutes for employed mothers; and 8 and 14 minutes for fathers. A study of Japanese fathers (Miura, 1981) found that while younger fathers were more likely than their elders to play with their babies and to help with child care and housework, still the majority had contact with their children for 20 minutes or less per day. A 1986 study comparing father-child relationships in Japan, America, and

West Germany, conducted by Somucho (Japanese Management and Coordination Agency), found that the average time spent with children (as reported by fathers), was lowest in Japan. While a majority of the Japanese children interviewed said that their father was a "hard worker," over a third answered that they hardly spent any time with him (Nihongo Journal, October, 1987: 57-58). I did not locate any recent statistical data on the availability of Japanese mothers, though it has been claimed that it is higher than in any Western society (e.g., Hendry, 1986b: 24-26). At the same time, some documentation of the effects of outside employment is already available. For example, a study of Tokyo children with working mothers found that fewer than 20 percent of the children interviewed (both in a working class and in a middle class neighborhood) said that their mothers were there to greet them when they returned home from school; ten percent of the mothers were not home in time to prepare the evening meal; and a sizeable proportion of the children reported spending long, unsupervised hours watching television and snacking (Iwao and Sugiyama, 1984). Current and projected trends in female employment, as well as survey results revealing growing ambivalence among Japanese women toward marriage and motherhood suggest that genuine kyoiku mama may be in increasingly short supply in the future.

Modes of parenting. The pace of social change in Japan and the United States makes it difficult to characterize current child rearing practices precisely in either society. In the twentieth century, both countries have absorbed a host of different, sometimes conflicting, theories of child development and child rearing. In both countries there is a great deal of journalistic and pop sociological writing criticizing the way children behave these days, much of it expressing nostalgia for the past, when, supposedly, families were stronger and the rules for raising children were clearer and tougher.

Viewed in isolation or against a European backdrop, the United States can easily be seen as the world's cradle of child rearing permissivenss. The great freedom allowed American children has been much commented upon by European visitors since the Federal period, and often cited as the cause of their precocious and cheeky behavior (Cable, 1972). Viewed in comparison to Japan, the picture is rather different. Western visitors to Japan were generally impressed by the mild, patient, even indulgent treatment of children by adults. An American who lived in Japan for several years during the Meiji Period remarked that:

> A rare thing is to hear a baby crying, and thus far I have never seen the slightest sign of impatience on the part of the mother. I believe Japan is the only nation in the world that yields so much to the babies, or in which babies are so good (quoted in Kojima, 1986: 3).

Americans who have the opportunity to visit Japanese homes are, however, often struck by an apparent anomaly in the behavior of children and in the response of adults to children's behavior. In schools, department stores, restaurants, subways and other public places, young children appear, by American standards remarkably docile. Yet in their

own homes these models of decorum often seem transformed into unruly household tyrants. Misbehavior which would provoke an American parent to a sharp rebuke, or more, is treated with extraordinary leniency, even indulgence. The highly disciplined behavior which the Japanese display in the classroom as well as in offices and factory assembly lines is not apparently the result of severe demands in the earliest years of life. Weaning, toilet training, sleeping alone, being disciplined for temper tantrums, aggression against parents, even for misbehavior in public, all begin on the average later in Japan than in the United States (De Vos, 1974; Lebra, 1976; Smith and Wiswell, 1982).

One particularly striking difference between Japanese and American modes of upbringing is in the use of physical force to control children. Even before child abuse became defined as a social problem in American, data were available showing that corporal punishment was routine in American homes. For example, a 1965 survey of California mothers showed that over a third of the mothers of 18-month-old children reported disciplining their babies at least once a week, 20 percent of them daily. Only a third of the mothers said their babies never did anything that required punishment. The majority of the punishments were in the form of slapping, hitting or spanking the child; non-physical punishments like scolding or isolating the child were much less frequently reported. As the children got older, the frequency of misdeeds and punishments increased, so that only about five percent of mothers of children between the ages of three and six said that the child never did anything that called for punishment (Heinstein, 1965). Perhaps not surprisingly, the empirical evidence available indicates that rates of physical abuse of children are several times higher in the United States than in Japan, even taking into account societal differences in defining and reporting abuse, and some encouraging evidence of a downward trend in abuse of American children during the past decade (Strauss and Gelles, 1986; Ikeda, 1984; Tamura, 1985).[1]

By all reports, physical punishment is much less frequently used in Japanese homes. Lebra (1976: 150) claims that Japanese mothers are much less likely than either Korean or Chinese mothers to beat their children, though she presents neither empirical evidence nor a source for her claim. According to Wagatsuma and Lanham (1983: 278), Japanese parents prefer modes of discipline that threaten the child with a loss of rapport with the parent rather than inflicting physical pain--e.g., "shaming the child by pointing out the effect his behavior would have upon himself and his family," or threatening to abandon or give him away. A description of this mode of social control is contained in the following passage"

> The mother may tell him that she is going away, far, far away, leaving him behind so that he will never see her again. She may threaten to give him away to someone and to adopt someone else's child in his place; she may pretend to love someone else's child more than her own. When a visitor is around, she might say, "We don't need this boy, so please take him with you." The visitor would cooperate with her by saying, "Oh, good. We wanted to have another child. Now

come along with me, my child." Meanwhile the child is clinging to his mother, crying frantically (Lebra, 1976: 151. See also Wagatsuma and DeVos, 1984: 230; DeVos, 1974; Benedict, 1946: 287).

In the opinion of some scholars, the focal point of difference between Japanese and American child rearing is the dimension of independence vs. dependence. What was distinctive about the new modes of child rearing developed in American during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the positive valuation placed upon individual initiative and self-reliance. Among the methods of nurturing independence in children recommended by nineteenth century experts was to let them roam freely outdoors, slide down the bannisters indoors, and speak before spoken to (Cable, 1972). Nowadays, American parents tend to define independence in terms of taking care of oneself and not "bothering" other people. Independence is encouraged, for example, by: "telling children to 'make up your mind' about what clothes to wear or what flavor ice cream to order, even when they are too young to exercise such judgement" (Befu, 1986: 22). In the Six Culture study, it was found that the New England mothers were higher than the mothers in any other society in the sample (including an Okinawan village) in discouraging their children from "running home to mothers with their problems instead of settling them themselves. . . it is felt that they should be more independent and bother their mothers less" (Minturn and Lambert, 1964: 191).

By contrast, dependency training begins early for the Japanese child, and the research literature identifies a number of mechanisms by which Japanese socialization "builds up and reinforces dependence and solidarity between the trainer and trainee" (Lebra, 1976: 138) One is that caretaking is likely to involve physical closeness (what the Japanese have called "skin-ship"). Breast feeding, relatively late weaning, co-bathing, co-sleeping, communicating with the baby physically (rocking, carrying, etc.) rather than verbally are all more prevalent in Japan than in the United States (Lebra, 1976: Chapter 8). Caudill found that, in addition, Japanese mothers were more likely to be "passively present" in the room with the baby, even when the baby was asleep or when they were not engaged in actual caretaking, than American mothers, who were "in and out", usually leaving the baby's room when they had completed some act of caretaking (Caudill and Weinstein, 1974: 253). In the best-selling child rearing handbook by Dr. Michio Matsuda (1967), often referred to as Japan's Dr. Spock, the major function of weaning seems to be social rather than nutritional. It's not so important that the baby learn to eat vegetables, or any other particular food--as a matter of fact, Matsuda recommends feeding the child from foods that are "on hand" (ariawase), rather than from a special "weaning-food menu." What is important is that the child eats with, and from the same menu, as the rest of the family, preferably by about age one (Hosotsuji, 1983: 104). As Ruth Benedict has put it, in Japanese households, "the baby is always counted in" (Benedict, 1946: 258)

Japanese socialization is much more likely than American socialization to be based upon the kind of life-long mutual dependence

that is connoted by the Japanese word amae. The subject of a highly influential book by the Japanese psychiatrist, Takeo Doi (1981, originally published, in Japanese, in 1966), amae is based upon the verb meaning to depend and presume upon another's benevolence (it also has the same root as the Japanese word for "sweet"). Doi believes that the complex mixture of passivity, mutuality, and "feeling of dependency coupled with the expectation of indulgence" that comprise amae are at the core of the Japanese psyche, but that the concept is quite alien to Western thinking, "with its exaltation of independence and self-sufficiency" (Doi, 1981: 54).

Most observers agree that the close interdependency fostered in Japanese children from birth has important consequences. On the one hand, it may contribute to their impressive school performance. Amae, says one prominent Japanese psychologist: "helps the child assimilate the hopes and values of the parents, thus enhancing the child's educability" (Azuma, 1986: 8). On the other hand, too much "hovering nurturance" and "fostered dependency" may prevent the child from distancing himself from the mother enough to develop a real sense of self. Unlike her American counterpart, the Japanese child may learn simply to "endure," rather than to "seek independent means of coping with his environment" (Wagatsuma and DeVos, 1984: 230). Caudill concludes that the Japanese child may have to struggle hard "to separate his identity from what he is only in relation to others--at first in the family, later in school, and still later in his occupation and marriage" (Caudill, 1961: 211).

In a content analysis of the best-selling books on child rearing in Japan and the U.S.--Dr. Michio Matsuda's Ikuji no Hyakka (Handbook of Child Rearing), and Dr. Benjamin Spock's Baby and Child Care --Hosotsuji (1983) found that both Spock and Matsuda cite independence as one of the components of a desirable personality or character. However, they seem to mean rather different things by independence: "Spock sets up independence as a desirable thing opposite to dependency on mother as a not-desirable thing, while Matsuda does not dispose of the problem of independence by a simple opposition-scheme" (Hosotsuji, 1981: 106). While dependence on mother is viewed by both men as necessary for the baby's sense of security, for Spock, full personal development requires the child to overcome and slough off that very dependency. For Matsuda, independence and dependence are not mutually exclusive, but run parallel to each other. Indeed, it is from the baby's powerful desire for companionship with other people that the first glimmerings of self-reliance can be seen. True independence, in Matsuda's conceptualization, is achieved not within the self but within the group.

With regard to control vs. permissiveness, it is Spock who consistently says that training should be firm and systematic, that parents should make clear to the child who is in charge. Thumb-sucking is a sign of developmental "regression" and should be stopped. Sleeping "problems" can be avoided by the child's having her own room and being put to bed on a regular schedule; at bedtime, the parent should put the child to bed, pleasantly but firmly, and leave the room. Even if the child cries to the point of vomiting, the parent should not give in, and

on no account should the child be allowed to sleep with the parents. Night feedings should be stopped as early as possible, and weaning is best accomplished with the first six months, because at that time the child does not yet have self- consciousness, a rationale reminiscent of John Robinson's advice to Plymouth Colony parents. By contrast, Matsuda's views often sound perilously close to "spoiling" by Spockian standards. It is not terribly important, says Matsuda, when one begins weaning or toilet training. The child's physiological make up, more than anything the parent does, will determine when these things will be accomplished, and it should be respected. Thumbsucking is a natural and pleasurable activity for most children, not the sign of some underlying problem. If the child has trouble going to sleep, let it sleep near or with a parent. Concerning finicky eating: it's natural for people to have food preferences. As long as the child is not suffering from some nutritional deficiency, we should accomodate his likes and dislikes in food. In sum, while Spock's child rearing methods have accused of fostering permissiveness, when one compares them with Japanese methods: "one would be led to call them anti-permissive, and to say that it is in Japan that the level of permissivenss is high" (Hosotsuji, 1983: 112).[2]

Harumi Befu, a Japanese-American anthropologist who has studied both societies closely, concluded that the major difference between the disciplinary approaches of Japanese and American mothers is that:

> the former uses solicitude rather than authority, which the latter might use, pleading with or begging a difficult child to do as he is told, rather than standing firm and meting out punishment. . . an American mother would look ridiculous to bystanders if she begged and pleaded with a three-to-five-year-old, whereas a Japanese mother who took an authoritarian approach would be regarded as lacking in human feeling (Befu's conclusions as summarized in Hendry, 1986b : 105).

Other analysts have argued that the major difference between Japan and the United States does not lie in some over-all or total difference in permissiveness, but in a different scheduling of the life course in the two societies. Benedict was among the first to observe that Japanese and Americans are differentially permissive at different stages in the life course:

> The arc of life in Japan is plotted in opposite fashion to that in the United States. It is a great shallow U-curve with maximum indulgence allowed to babies and to the old. Restrictions are slowly increased after babyhood till having one's own way reaches a low just before and after marriage. This low line continues many years during the prime of life, but the arc gradually ascends again until after the age of sixty men and women are almost as unhampered by shame as little children are. In the United States we stand this curve upside down. Firm disciplines are directed toward the infant and these are gradually relaxed as the child grows in

> strength until a man runs his own life when he gets a self-supporting job and when he sets up a household of his own. The prime of life is with us the high point of freedom and initiative. Restrictions begin to appear as men lose their grip or their energy or become dependent (Benedict, 1946: 253-54).

3. The Preschool System

One of the surprises of my early days of field work in Japan was to discover such a highly developed system of outside-the-home child care facilities in a society that has been viewed as anti-feminist and family-centered in the extreme. Precise international comparisons of preschool enrollments are difficult because of differences in the composition of preschool systems in different societies, but there is evidence that Japan has one of the world's highest rates. For example, a 1982 study of child care arrangments of working mothers in six nations (Japan, Koreas, U.S.A., Great Britain, West German, and France) showed that Japan was the only nation in which the majority of children aged five or younger were enrolled in an organized preschool program (though France had the highest proportion of children in public kindergartens and nursery schools. Youth Development Headquarters, 1982). As one specialist has put it, preschool has acquired the status of "semi-compulsory education" in Japan, and even for children younger than three, group care outside the home has become "socially established" (Murayama, 1983: 16-17).

Group care, even for very young children, may be more acceptable in Japan than in the U.S., because it is not basically inconsistent with traditional Japanese culture or Confucian ethics, both of which posit a group-centered existence and place great value upon harmonious group relations. While strong family relationships are highly valued, socialization in children's groups is also considered both natural and essential for full human development. In traditional village culture, it was said that: "A child cannot be raised by mother's love alone," and the children's peer group was viewed as a major socializer for children from about the age of seven (Hara and Wagatsuma, 1974: 5-15; Akada, 1984). This may explain why the spread of government-subsidized preschool and after-school programs has proceeded more quickly and smoothly in Japan than in the United States, where day care still raises the specter of maternal deprivation and neglect. It may also explain why Japanese scholars and educators have neither conducted systematic research on the effects of group care on children's cognitive and social development, nor paid much attention to the huge body of American research on this subject (interviews with K. Nakanishi, Munbusho, December 9, 1985; and S. Matsuda, Koseisho, December 16, 1985. American research on the effects of day care is summarized in Belsky and Steinberg, 1978; Bradley, 1982). To the Japanese, as one outsider has commented, group care outside the home may be viewed as simply reinforcing the group consciousness already acquired in the home (Christopher, 1983: 76).

By contrast, the modal form of child care in the U.S. is the unlicensed babysitter. Only 25 percent of three-year-olds and 43 percent of four-year-olds are in organized preschool programs, many of which operate as little as two hours a day twice a week; not until age five are the majority of American children enrolled. Seven out of ten preschool children whose mothers work outside the home are cared for in their own homes or in someone else's home, and few of the caretakers have received any kind of professional training for their work (Youth Development Headquarters, 1982; Hechinger, 1986: Introduction). At the same time, while "underdeveloped" relative to systems in other industrialized nations, the American preschool system is the fastest growing segment of the educational system.

The Japanese preschool system. The majority of Japanese preschoolers are enrolled either in yochien of in hoiku-en. Yochien, which are under the authority of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Munbusho), are not exactly comparable to any one type of American preschool, but combine elements of the kindergarten and the nursery school. Most yochien accept children from age three until six, when they enter elementary school. Most programs run for four hours a day, though some have now extended their hours in response to the demands of working mothers. Hoiku-en, which are under the authority of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (Koseisho), are comparable to American day care centers. While most children in day care are between the ages of three and six, many hoiku-en now accept younger children, some as young as six weeks (when the national materniity leave program expires). The standard hoiku-en program is for eight hours a day, six days a week, though again some now offer extended hours to accomdate parents with irregular working hours or long commutes.

Preschools may be established by a variety of agents: public agencies at the village, town, ward, city, even national levels; religious organizations (mainly Christian or Buddhist--many preschools operate in and constitute a major source of income for Buddhist temples); private social service corporations or foundations; private employers, especially in organizations which hire many women (e.g., department stores and hospitals); labor unions; and associations based upon a particular pedagogical theory (e.g., Montessori preschools). All licensed facilities are required to adhere to national minimum standards which specify in some detail requirements with regard to size or classes or groups, numbers and qualifications of personnel, number of hours per day and days per year of operation, physical space, and equipment. However, actual authorization to establish a preschool must be obtained at the prefectural level, or in the case of Tokyo and Osaka, at the metropolitan level, where an application is evaluated with respect to the needs of the area as well as its adherence to national standards.

The various levels of government are bound to each other not only by complementary--sometimes competing--policy-making and supervisory functions, but also by the complex system of financing preschools. There have been frequent shifts of governmental funding patterns during the post-World War II period, reflecting shifts in political power and

in the relative effectiveness of lobbying activities on behalf of children programs. For hoiku-en, both public and private, operating expenses are divided about evenly between parents and government, with the national government assuming until recently 8/10 of the government burden and the remainder shared by prefectural and local governments.[3] Building, remodeling and equipment expenses are also subsidized (about half from the national government). In the case of yochien, public and private establishements have separate funding systems. Both receive financial assistance for buildings and equipment, but all public but only some private establishements receive subsidies for operational expenditures.[4]

Some municipal governments have chosen to subsidize child care at higher levels, so as to provide higher quality care than required by the national minimum standards and to ease the financial burdens on parents. The major example is Tokyo, which under a welfare-oriented socialist adminstration, pushed through a program of increased support of many programs including day care, with the result that the child-caretaker ratios are more favorable and the fees paid by parents lower than in other parts of Japan. (At the time I was interviewing in 1985, the maximum fee paid by Tokyo parents, including affluent professional families with two working parents, was equivalent to about U.S.$150 per month, about half of what parents in my other research site, a prefectural capital on opposite coast of Japan, paid for the same type of care.)

It has been argued that Japan as a society is characterized by a high degree of consensus regarding important cultural values and modes of socialization, which in turn leads to a high degree of uniformity within social institutions. For example, in a recent study of early childhood socialization by a British anthropologist, the author justified the conclusions she drew from a rather small and selective sample of preschools on the grounds that:

> there were enough common features to make possible a considerable amount of generalization about pre-school establishments in Japan. Much of this may be due to national concern and the legally sanctioned standards, which make the whole educational system remarkably comprehensive and uniform compared with that found in other nations (Hendry, 1986b: 128).

I believe, however, that it is a mistake to over-emphasize the commonalities in the system, and that there are in fact variations within the system that have important implications for the care and socialization of the children within them. I shall mention just three.

(1) Ministry of Education vs. Ministry of Welfare auspices. Japanese kindergartens and day nurseries, like their American and European counterparts, had very different historical origins. The early yochien, most of which were founded by Japanese who had traveled abroad and observed European and American kindergartens or who had studied books on early childhood education imported from the West after the

Meiji Restoration, were primarily for the children of the wealthy. Hoiku-en, begun around the turn of the century, were initially designed for the children of the poor. As in the United States, day care was primarily a reformers' response to the problems of industrialization and urbanism. Some early hoiku-en attempted to incorporate the pedagogical content of the yochien, but since the children came mainly from urban slum homes and most required all day care, there was also a strong emphasis upon improving eating habits, personal hygience, and morals that is reminiscent of Jane Adams and Hull House (the best study in English of early Japanese preschools is Uno, 1987).

There is considerable disagreement over the degree of differentiation that exists--and should exist--between kindergarten and day care programs. The National Council on Educational Reform appointed by Prime Minister Nakasone recommended greater coordination of programs, but it is hard to see how this can be brought about given the stake the two governmental ministries, not to mention a host of officials at lower levels of government, have in protecting their "territory," and the substantially different financing, staffing, and application procedures for yochien and hoiku-en. In the former, parents apply directly to the establishment of their choice. There is considerable variation in fees--some elite kindergartens cost more than private universities. Yochien may also set their own entrance requirements. Some pretigious ones accept fewer than one in five of the three-year-olds whose parents apply, and the competition for entrance, viewed by many parents as necessary to ensure ultimate acceptance into a major university and thus into a desirable occupation, has spawned a new generation of cram schools specializing in the preparation of one- and two-year-olds and their parents for kindergarten entrance exams (Japan Times, November 23, 1985).

A parents wishing to enroll a child in a day care center applies not to a particular establishment but to the local municipal office. Acceptance is determined by the degree to whch the child is defined as "in need of care" by a set of criteria used nationwide, as well as by the availability of places. Thus children of working mothers, disabled or seriously ill parents, or single parents are given priority over other children. The fee, also paid to the municipality, is based upon family income, more precisely upon the amount of income tax the parents or guardians pay.

Some preschool practitioners feel that because day care establishments are, in general, more dependent upon the public sector than kindergartens, they are more controlled by it, less flexible and innovative. Social control over the children may also be stronger in the former than in the latter, since the hours are generally longer, the range of activities broader, the groups smaller and child-to-teacher ratios lower, and the staff more experienced. There are also differences in expectations concerning the mother's role. Although they may not fully approve of it, people connected with hoiku-en assume that the mothers of the children enrolled are at work or for some other reason are not available during most of the children's waking hours. Among the people involved with yochien, on the other hand, a stay-at-

home mother or the equivalent is still assumed. As a Ministry of Education official I interviewed put it: "If the parent wants to work, we would like her to take the child to a day care center. Kindergarten presupposes a home... Long hours of caring is not what [the kindergarten] should be."

At the same time, there are indicators of convergence between the two types of preschools. Requirements for certification, while still divergent, have more overlap than in the past. Some training programs now provide certification for both, and about 80 percent of day care hobo-san (nurses) are also qualified to teach in kindergartens. Perhaps more important, the stigma of day care, the conventional belief that "nursery schools are for rich children, day care centers for poor children," has declined, so that enrollment appears to be less strongly correlated with family status than is the case in the United States. Part of this decline is undoubtedly explained by the level of governmental subsidizing, which has made licensed day care, especially in places like Tokyo which subsidize at a very high level, such an obvious bargain that the sorts of people who do not generally use day care in the U.S. (e.g., professional women) are much more likely to do so in Japan.

Public vs. private preschools. The majority of hoiku-en (60%) are public, while almost 60 percent of yochien are private. (Over three-quarters of the children enrolled in yochien attend private ones, reflecting the higher average enrollment at private than at public establishments.) The correlation between social class and use of public vs. private facilities, also strong in the United States, appears to be much less significant in Japan. Indeed in the case of day care, some would claim that the only difference between public and private establishments is whether the founder was a governmental agency or a private person or association, but that in all other respects--how they are financed, what kinds of children are enrolled, and what minimum standards are observed--public vs. private is a distinction without a difference.

Despite these claims, there are clearly differences in salaries and working conditions. The staff of public licensed day care centers enjoy the same salaries as other municipal employees, but in private establishements, salaries tend to be lower, hours of work longer, child-to-staff ratios higher, working conditions more stressful, and, predictably, turnover rates higher.

There is more general acknowledgement of and concern about the distinctions between public and private yochien. Parents' fees are on the average markedly higher in private kindergartens than in any other type of preschool (about four times higher than public kindergartens nationwide, and almost six times higher in Tokyo). The dropping birth rate combined with minimal government support has led to fierce competition among private kindergartens, and to economies that lower the quality of the educational program. Many classes exceed 40 children; many schools exceed 400 (double the enrollment recommended by the Ministry of Education and by UNESCO guidelines). Bussing is more frequent as schools seek enrollments from a larger area.

Licensed vs. unlicensed establishments. The distinction which is probably even more significant today than the two already discussed is that between licensed, or legally established and government subsidized facilities, and those which are muninka, or unlicensed. The unlicensed category includes a variety of establishments. Some are pioneering experiments, such as the nurseries established in the textile mills that employed so many women during Japan's rush to "overtake the West" industrially during the Meiji period. Some are cooperative ventures initiated by parents and/or teachers with innovative or politically radical pedagogical theories that could not be accomodated within the more mainstream government-supported institutions. Most cooperative establishments, however, are patronized by parents who do not qualify for, cannot afford, or are on a waiting list for a licensed day care program.

Clearly, the most serious weaknesses in the Japanese preschool system are to be found in the unlicensed sector. Of particular concern are commercial establishments, especially those known as bebi hoteru ("baby hotels"), which typically operate 24 hours a day, charge by the hour, have no formal application procedures, and are not covered by liability insurance. Public attention was drawn to the problems of unlicensed establishments in the early 1080s, when the death of several children in baby hotels precipatated a flood of newspaper and magazine articles, an influential television documentary, and several empirical research studies. It was learned, for example, that of the 130 deaths which occurred in child care establishments between 1968-1982, 90 percent occurred in unlicensed establishements, and 85 percent occurred when a caretaker was not present. It was also learned that while many users of commercial child care are parents whose hours do not fit the eight-hour daytime schedules of most licensed establishments (e.g., waitresses, beauticians, sales clerks) or who live in areas where there is a scarcity of licensed facilities, and some are housewives who simply need a temporary baby-sitting service (rare in Japan), a high proportion are women who are bar hostesses or otherwise employed in the large entertainment districts found in all Japanese cities (Okashima, 1984; TBS Hodo-kyoiku, 1981).

Besides the obvious issues of child abuse and neglect raised by these investigations, they pointed to potential cleavages in a society that likes to think of itself as classless, or more precisely, as uniformly middle class. Not only do government agencies fail to support and supervise most unlicensed establishments,[8] they tend to ignore them--and the unmet needs they represent--until some mishap focuses public attention on them. Until then, both the public and private sectors tend to distance themselves from the problem, and from the large number of Japanese mothers who work at jobs viewed as not entirely respectable. A prefectural official, discussing the problems of unlicensed child care, summed up the prevailing attitude in saying:

> I would really like to help nurses, but I certainly wouldn't want to bother to help those women whose job is to flirt with drunkards.

4. The Social Structure of Child Care Settings

During a recent visit to Japan, Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, described life in a Japanese kindergarten as "heaven before reality sets in." Certainly a high proportion of Japanese preschool strike the visitor as extremely pleasant places--clean and well lit, further brightened by displays of children's art work (itself often of strikingly high quality) and the colored caps that distinguish children of different age groups. There is often an attention to details that tend to be overlooked in the preschools of other societies (for example, the meals and snacks often have high aesthetic as well as nutritional value). Verbal and physical "stroking" are frequent, slaps and "Shut up's" rare.

At the same time, school socialization, as well as home socialization, emphasizes doing one's best and doing things correctly, values which have a long history in Japanese culture. The Confucian model of education taught that there is a correct way to carry out any task, and that if the learner is taught that correct way, she will do it freely, without external constraints. In the preschools I observed, a good deal of time was spent in teaching children the "correct" way to do many things--how to sit in a chair, to hold a fork or chop-sticks, to fold up one's futon (mattress) after a nap, to arrange chairs for an assembly.

Recent research on crosscultural differences in academic achievement has also pointed to differences in children's classroom behavior. The observational studies of American, Japanese, and Taiwanese first and fifth grade classrooms conducted by Harold Stevenson and associates have documented striking quantitative differences in the activity levels of American students compared with their East Asian counterparts. The number of hours per week during which children passively received information from their teachers was almost twice as high for Japanese as for American children, even higher for the Chinese children. Classroom activities were led by the teacher on an average of 90 percent of the time in the Chinese schools, 70 percent in the Japanese, but less than 50 percent of the time in the American schools. American children were much more likely than Japanese or Taiwanese children to engage in "inappropriate activities," such as talking to peers or wandering around the room (Stevenson et al., 1983, and 1986).

Studies by William Caudill and several associates, comparing 30 Japanese and 30 American mother-infant pairs, indicated that differences in activity levels appear very early:

> American infants show greater amounts of gross bodily activity, play (with toys, hands and other objects), and happy vocalization; in contrast, Japanese babies seem passive, having only a greater amount of unhappy vocalization. American mothers do more looking at, positioning the body of, and chatting to their infants;

> Japanese mothers do more carrying, rocking and lulling of their infants. . . the American mother seems to encourage her baby to be active and vocally responsive, while the Japanese mother acts in ways which she believes will soothe and quiet her baby (Caudill and Schooler, 1973: 324).

Caudill's research was, however, conducted some 25 years ago, and it is difficult to judge the degree to which his conclusions still apply. At least some observations of preschool children in the 1980s suggest that activity levels among children in Japanese preschools are as high as those in American preschools, and that it is only after they reach elementary school that Japanese children acquire the quiet, attentive demeanor which so impresses foreign visitors (presentations by Harold Stevenson, Mariko Fujita and Toshiyaki Sano, and James Tobin, conference on Social Control and Early Childhood Education in Japan, Muir Beach, California, October, 1987. The most comprehensive study to date on the transition from home to school is Peak, 1987).

It is also believed, however, that children learn better through observation and imitation, a process the Japanese term minarai. Minarai, which combines elements of activity and passivity, is still the standard method for teaching traditional Japanese arts and crafts. More recently, it has been applied to teaching certain Western skills, as illustrated by the Suzuki method of music instruction. The Suzuki method requires the beginning student of the violin or piano simply to observe more experienced students' lessons, quietly but with full concentration, for a period of weeks or even months, then to spend more weeks or months learning to stand in front of the teacher and to bow properly, before even touching the instrument let alone attempting to play it. When the student finally does begin to make music, he will already have correct habits as well as tremendously high motivation, and progress will be rapid (Peak, 1986). It is probably not coincidental that the Suzuki method has not enjoyed great success in the United States, and where it has been accepted it has been only after considerable modification of the basic model to accomodate the hyperactivity that is considered normal for American children.

Researchers who have studied Japanese and American classrooms claim that there is more explicit attention to the development of children's sense of collective identity and more extensive use of peer groups as a classroom management device in the former than in the latter. Hendry's study of kindergartens includes the following examples:

> First of all, considerable attention is devoted to creating a new inside group for these children to identify with. As children arrive at kindergarten they may play freely in the playground for a while, but at an appointed hour each day the class gathers in its own room and goes through an important greeting sequence. . . . Similar routines accompany the serving of meals, and break, and separation at the end of the day...

> Each child in the room will be wearing the same uniform, or at least a smock or apron to make them alike, and every child is provided with identical sets of equipment. During the course of the day, many activities will be carried out together, each child being instructed to make the same preparations as the others, and following the teacher's demonstration. . .
>
> Forms of address and reference used with the children reinforce this emphasis on equality within the group. All the children in the same class are referred to as "friends" by parents and teachers alike, and children are not encouraged to seek out special friends for themselves. . . There is a collective term of address, mina-san. Addressed in this way, the children are expected to chorus their reply. Used in its possessive form, it denotes the collective ownership of classroom and kindergarten equipment, for which everyone is therefore responsible (Hendry, 1986a: 55. Lewis, 1984, also contains multiple examples of the sort of cooperative group activities favored in Japanese preschools).

By contrast, individualism has been cited as the central feature of American culture and as "the most stable and salient feature of the American approach to childrearing" (Robinson, Robinson et al., 1973: 23. See also Bellah et al., 1985; Befu, 1986: 22). While individualism is one of a cluster of values which distinguish "Western" from "Eastern" culture generally, the extent to which individual initiative and self-realization are encouraged, even in young children, seems uniquely American. The principle of respect for and full development of each child's unique potential came to be identified with Dewey's theory of Progressive education, the most influential American pedagogical model of the early twentieth century. Though Dewey himself argued for a "reconcilliation of the individualistic and institutional ideals" (Dewey, 1964: 438), the actual application of Progressive theory in American schools and its exportation to other societies often emphasized the former at the expense of the latter.

In recent years, both Americans and Japanese have voiced concern over their society's extreme location on the "group vs. individual" dimension. A team of prominent American child development experts, including Urie Bronfenbrenner and Julius B. Richmond, has decried an approach to child rearing which focuses so exclusively on the self that social skills and commitments to the group and the larger society are all but forgotten:

> Throughout, the focus is on the individual child, his "self-realization" through "self-discovery" and "self-motivated behavior." While other people are to assist him in this process, they are not to get in his way. As for the question of the child's obligations to others--especially to those not his own age--the training manuals are strangely silent. Perhaps in a deeper sense than Americans intended,

their ideology of upbringing is indeed "child-centered" (Robinson, Robinson, et al., 1973: 23).

The Japanese have also been engaged in a national debate over the social institutions responsible for the care and education of children, but not surprisingly, their concerns have been about the harmful effects of shudan-shugi (group-ism), and about how to promote more individual autonomy and creativity in a society in which the group generally takes precedence over the individual (Takahashi, 1985. For an insightful analysis of Japanese educational reform in the 1980s, in particular, the activities of the task force appointed by Prime Minister Nakasone to "liberalize" the Japanese educational system, see Shimahara, 1987).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The American sociologist Robert K. Merton once formulated a sociological principle which says in effect that whatever exists in a society is possible. I would like to conclude by positing three aspects of the American child care system which I see as placing great numbers of children at risk, and where in each case, the Japanese experience provides concrete evidence that it is possible to do things differently and, to my way of thinking, better.

First, too many American children are at risk due to inattentiveness, impatience, and actual mistreatment by adults, and too many Americans regard this as a normal, inevitable, even acceptable state of affairs. I am not talking just about the issue of child abuse. Though physical abuse of the sort that brought about Elizabeth Steinberg's death is indeed a serious social problem, it is part of a larger set of adult modes of controlling children, based upon the routine use of anger, threats, and physical force, rather than the admittedly more time-consuming methods that guide children to desired behavior through reasoning, explaining, and "setting a good example." Field work by my students at Rutgers University, in shopping malls, waiting rooms and other public places, as well as in private homes, has documented the ubiquity of a certain pattern of behavior: adults ignore children until something goes wrong, and then shout at them, slap them, or terrorize them with threats of some painful or frightening punishment. Indeed my students last year concluded that the arm yank--grabbing a small child by the arm and wrenching it, often close to the point of dislocation--may be the modal disciplinary technique practiced in the State of New Jersey!

What is equally telling is that these same students--may of them sociology or education majors who might be expected to be especially sensitive to problems relating to children--reacted with disbelief to my informing them that Swedish law now prohibits parents from using physical force on their own (or anyone else's) children. Most felt such a law wouldn't work. "How can you raise children properly without spanking them?" they wondered. "Don't parents have the right to use their parental authority as they see fit?"

The still widespread belief among Americans in the necessity of physical punishment is distressing, especially given the rather clear research evidence on the destructive effects of irritation, aggression, and the use of force to induce obedience in children (for a brief but clear summary of recent findings, see Goleman, 1986). Japanese socialization models also remind us that other paths to adulthood are possible--that maintaining secure and pleasant environments for children, observing them closely and attending to them before trouble begins, avoiding confrontations, displays of adult authority and strong negative sanctions, and causing children to understand rather than forcing them to obey do not necessarily "spoil" children, as many Americans still seem to believe, but may on the contrary account for the impressive social skills and high levels of productivity displayed by so many Japanese adults.

Second, too many American children are at risk because their parents cannot find or afford good child care arrangments. Poor children are especially at risk when good preschool programs are not available. I acknowledge and respect the view of American child development specialists who believe that for most young children, spending the whole day in even the best group care cannot equal spending a good portion of their waking hours in a home with one or a few loving and attentive caretakers. The reality of late twentieth century American, however, is that such settings are just not available to all or even most children. To put it another way, good group care may not be ideal care, but it is a whole lot better than the ad hoc arrangments which many American families are forced to make.

I believe, moreover, that the American phobia against group child care (a view, incidentally, which sets the U.S. apart from other developed societies, Western or Eastern) itself contributes to the continuing low average quality of American facilities. There is ample evidence that carefully designed programs, like the Perry Preschool Project and other programs included in the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (1983), not only do not harm children, but can have a number of long-lasting benefits. I admit to being biased on the subject, but my own observations in Japanese day care centers and nurseries often left me feeling sorry for children who were not in such programs, who were just home with Mom or a baby-sitter all day.

I am not persuaded by arguments that say: yes, projects like the Perry Project are okay, but they work because they are of unusually high quality. My response to that sort of argument is to ask: why do we persist in defining high quality programs as luxuries we cannot afford rather than using what we have learned from these project to make them available to as many children and families as need them? This is not to say that quality preschool programs will be cheap, but they are much cheaper than special education programs at higher levels of the educational system, cheaper than counseling services, unemployment compensation, and the "services" of our overloaded criminal justice system--and they have been shown to reduce the need for the far more costly programs for older children and adults.

Third, too many American children are at risk because while most of us will go to great lengths to gain advantages for our own children, we are not zealous enough on behalf of other people's children, particularly when the other people differ from us in race and/or social class. Whenever I return to the United States from Japan or other countries in which I have studied child care, I am shocked anew at the large number of really awful facilities for children that we allow to exist, at the extent to which our society is not permeated by a deep interest in our youngest members and their welfare.

Granted that the Japanese level of commitment to children and to education may be unique (see, e.g., White, 1987)--it may even be excessive in certain respects. The rows upon rows of books on child rearing that line bookstore walls, and the outpouring of new products for children--from clothing to dishes to furniture--may exceed any reasonable definition of "need." Certainly, the pressures on parents and teachers to give children a head start in the academic rat-race are more formidable than most Americans can even imagine. Moreover, it remains to be seen whether the impressive system of preschool institutions and services will survive a combination of demographic, political and economic trends that do not augur well for continued high levels of governmental investments in children's programs. As in the U.S., the birth rate has dropped so precipitously that even though the proportion of children of a given age cohort enrolled in preschools continues to rise, the declining proportion of children in the total population weakens the bargaining power of parents and children's advocates. This development, which has occurred in a context of governmental cutbacks for human services of all sorts, has already led to reduced governmental subsidies to licensed child care facilities, a virtual halt in construction of new facilities, and in some instance closing of already exising ones.

Still, the extent to which the Japanese government has shared responsibility with the family for the care of children is worthy of study and emulation. So is the level of citizen activism. Advocacy of the sort pioneered by Marion Wright Edelman, of the Children's Defense Fund, is now relatively more extensive in Japan, where it takes a different form, but has sensitized a broad cross-section of the Japanese electorate to the needs of children (Boocock, 1987).

In sum, I believe that comparisons of Japanese and American child care problems and programs can show us where we are weak and suggest some new or alternative solutions. This is not to advocate making over the American child care system into a child-sized Japan, Inc. Cultural and societal differences are very real. As any Westerner who has studied Japanese society in any depth knows, it's far easier to import automobiles and color TV's than to import the modes of socialization which produced the people who make those automobiles and color TV's. There is ample evidence of the futility of superficial applications of any society's models to another society's social institutions. Yet Merton's Law reminds us that there is usually more than one way to define a social problem and to design a solution. And good crosscultural research, which is a kind of application of Merton's Law,

forces us to re-think some of our preconceptions about childhood and child care, and may in the process strengthen our resolve to do better by our children.

NOTES

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[1] Restraint of the child's natural impulses and severe punishments for misdeeds have a long history in American child rearing, as illustrated in the following passage from John Robinson's Of Children and Their Education:

> And surely there is in all children. . . a stubborness, and stoutness of mind arising from natural pride, which must, in the first place, be broken and beaten down; that so the foundation of their education being laid in humility and tractableness, other virtures may, in their time, be built thereon. . . For the beating, and keeping down of this stubborness parents must provide carefully. . . that the children's wills and wilfulness be restrained and repressed, and that in time; lest sooner than they imagine, the tender sprigs grow to that stiffness, that they will rather break than bow (quoted in Demos, 1970: 134-5).

Disobedience to parents was an offense punishable in all the New England colonies by public whipping and in one (Connecticut) by death. Should the threat of earthly punishments prove insufficient, there was always the threat of punishment from a higher source. In The Family Well Ordered or An Essay to Render Parents and Children Happy in One Another) (1699), Mather warned disobedient children that: "It won't be long before you go down into Obscure Darkness, even into Utter Darkness; God has Reserv'd for you the Blackness of Darkness forever" (quoted in Cable, 1972: 10).

[2] Hosotsuji also points out that while Matsuda's position has remained consistent from one edition of his handbook to another, Spock's views have shifted, in the direction of recommending greater control of children's behavior, and that:

> If one views the changes of content in Spock's books as reflecting his position in the main-stream of American society, one could say that the revised edition was written under circumstances in which there was a rivalry or tension between pressures to soften or moderate strictness and pressures to resist the kind of softness that leads to permissiveness (Hosotsuji, 1983: 112).

[3] As part of the administrative reforms initiated by the Nakasone government, the national budget for 1985 reduced the contribution of the national government to all welfare programs, including day care, by ten percent, leaving the lower levels of government to cover the short-fall, and further cuts have been announced (Zenkuoku Hoiku Dantai Renmei-kai, 1985).

[4] As part of a government policy to encourage incorporation of private kindergartens, those which become incorporated as educational foundations (kyoiku hojin) become eligible for government subsidies, while those run by religious groups which are not incorporated or by individuals are not eligible.

[5] Prefectural and municipal governments now have the right to "control" unlicensed as well as licensed establishments, but my informants indicated that this control consists of occasional visits to a few facilities to see if they satisfy minimum standards. A Tokyo official acknowledged that: "in reality, we don't go in and supervise all of them."

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